UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/2000/SR.46
26 June 2000

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Fifty-sixth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Monday, 13 April 2000 at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. SIMKHADA (Nepal)
later: Mr. IBRAHIM (Sudan)

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 7

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:

(a) MIGRANT WORKERS
(b) MINORITIES
(c) MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS
(d) OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Commission at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.00-12986 (EXT)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION SUBMITTED UNDER AGENDA ITEM 7.

Draft resolution E/CN.4/2000/L.14 (The Right to development)

1. Mr. MONTWEDI (South Africa), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China, recalled that the implementation of the right to development had caused problems at the Commission's previous session, but that meaningful progress had since been made. The unanimous confirmation of Mr. Deubri, Ambassador of Algeria as the Chairman of the Working Group on the Right to Development augured well for future progress in the Working Group, as did the consensus reached on the need for it to convene in of two sessions before the Commission's fifty-seventh session.

2. The sponsors of draft resolution L.14 had retained the text adopted the previous year and had merely added three paragraphs of a procedural nature. He read out a number of editorial changes to paragraph 2 of the draft. In the first line, the words "the fiftieth anniversary" should be replaced by "the passage of more than 50 years since the adoption". In the second line, the words "provided an important opportunity" should be replaced by "demands that we strengthen efforts to". The paragraph would accordingly read: "Recognizes that the passage of more than 50 years since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights demands that we strengthen efforts to place all human rights - and, in this context, the right to development in particular - at the top of the global agenda;".

3. Speaking on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement and China and of the other sponsors, he expressed the hope that the draft would be adopted by consensus.

4. Mrs. IZE-CHARRIN (Secretary of the Commission) announced that France, Uruguay, El Salvador, Portugal, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Denmark, Greece, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, New Zealand, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Australia, Norway, Spain, Finland, Ireland, Belgium, Japan, Burundi and Canada had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

5. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Commission wished to adopt draft resolution E/CN.4/2000/L.14 without a vote.

6. It was so decided.

7. Draft resolution E/CN.4/2000/L.14 was adopted without a vote.

SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS:

(a) MIGRANT WORKERS

(b) MINORITIES

(c) MASS EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

(d) OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS

(Agenda item 14) (continued) (E/CN.4/2000/76-79, 80 and Add.1, 81, 82, 83 and Add.1 and 2 and 138; E/CN.4/2000/NGO/15, 22, 31, 47 and 58; E/CN.5/2000/3; A/54/303 and 348; E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/21)

8. Mr. MAXIM (Observer for Romania) said that his country was located in the vicinity of the "powder keg" of the Balkans, a region which for a decade or so had been the scene of one of the most terrible humanitarian disasters since the Second World War in terms of victims, human displacement and human rights abuses. The international community had reacted and was still searching for long-term solutions that would put an end to ethnic and religious violence. His country had listened very carefully to the statement by Mr. Dinstbier, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the region. It was true that in order to defuse tensions and achieve a long-term solution, it was necessary, among other things, to adopt multilateral measures and encourage the peoples of the region to open up, accept dialogue and recognize each other's basic human rights. Concrete action was also needed at the grass-roots level. Communities had to understand that if democratic rules were respected, day-to-day life would improve. Otherwise, efforts to improve the region would be seriously damaged, giving way to confusion and disappointment and creating favourable ground for dictatorship, human rights abuses and political and social unrest. That was why his country was making a strong appeal to the international community to back all initiatives aimed at the realization of democratic standards and values in the region.

9. The issue of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities had particular resonance in central and eastern Europe, where preserving the national identity had often been accompanied by a lack of understanding between majority and minority populations, the first fearing for the cohesion of the State and the second preferring isolation to cooperation. In that turbulent context, Romania had done its utmost to improve the protection of the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups in its territory. It had rapidly acceded to the major international and regional human rights instruments and had been the first country to sign the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities adopted by the Council of Europe. It had concluded treaties with neighbouring countries defining the conditions for bilateral cooperation to preserve the identity of persons belonging to national minorities and had taken important steps at the national level to facilitate the participation of minorities in political, economic and social life. It had set up the Department for Protection of National Minorities, headed by an ethnic Hungarian, which was responsible for elaborating draft legislation to benefit minorities and supervising the implementation of national and international standards on minorities. The legal framework for such activities was constantly being improved. The Constitution guaranteed ethnic organizations access to positions in the State legislature. Such organizations now held more than 10 per cent of the total number of seats in Parliament, in which not only Hungarians but also members of the Roma people were represented. The law on education had been amended to enable persons belonging to national minorities to be taught in their mother tongue, including at the higher educational level. Romania was in the vanguard in that area, being one of the very few countries to have adopted such measures. The most recent of which was establishment of the multicultural university in Cluj-Napoca with the support of the High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Other measures related to the restitution to persons belonging to national minorities and religious denominations of property confiscated under the communist regime, the use of languages other than Romanian in public administration and the use of bilingual inscriptions.

10. Mr. CASTRILLÓN (Ecuador) said he welcomed the submission of the first report by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, which contained recommendations for the elaboration of strategies to solve the problems of migrants and their families.

11. For decades, like other countries in Latin America, Ecuador had been letting in numerous immigrants who were often extremely poor or fleeing persecution. Today, however, Latin America was caught up in the dynamics of globalization, causing the displacement of production components, particularly labour. Many Ecuadorians had emigrated for economic reasons to North America and Europe, where they were helping to fuel the economic progress of their adoptive countries. Ecuador protected its nationals who had emigrated by applying its legislation and the international instruments to which it was a party, particularly those dealing with human rights. Migrants, including undocumented ones, enjoyed the same rights as everyone else. Since they were often in a vulnerable situation, they actually needed greater legal and administrative protection. The Ecuadorian Government had, however, received complaints of ill-treatment or discriminatory acts in international ports and airports, abuses in the areas of labour and housing and problems relating to family reunification and the exercise of paternal authority. It called for the rights of migrants to be taken into account in the adoption of administrative provisions and the implementation of regulations on immigration. It firmly denounced the xenophobia to which migrants were subjected abroad and called on the international community and individual States to take steps to combat prejudice and intolerance. Accordingly, it welcomed the intention of the Special Rapporteur to contribute to the work of the upcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance as well as her participation in the activities carried out by the United Nations in the context of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

12. His country would vote in favour of the draft resolution in support of the work done by the Special Rapporteur and encouraged the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to do everything possible to facilitate the success of her mission. Ecuador would also sponsor the draft resolution calling on States to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and appealed to the Commission to support the passage of those very important proposals.

13. Mr. DESPOUY (Argentina) said that migration was not really a voluntary act but was linked to social and economic factors. It had a significant impact on the family and often resulted in separation and culture shock. Migrants frequently suffered the loss of emotional ties and material goods, which made their integration into a new society all the more difficult.

14. Like other countries, Argentina had always been favourable to taking in immigrants, an act which was facilitated by its Constitution and generous provisions on nationality. It had always believed that migrants were a vulnerable group that faced many problems: racism, xenophobia, discrimination, ill-treatment, legal uncertainty and, often, the violation of their economic, social and cultural rights by the receiving country. It therefore welcomed the report of the Special Rapporteur, and in particular, supported her recommendation on including the protection of migrants in the preparatory work for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. The Commission should call strongly for the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, which contained provisions relating to migrants. The treaties concluded by Argentina with Peru and Bolivia considerably improved the situation of migrants from those countries in Argentina, which frequently adopted measures to regularize the situation of undocumented migrants.

15. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development, Mr. Lindquist, for his work on the follow-up to the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. A Convention must be drafted on that subject and, in that connection, the establishment of a working group could be useful.

16. Mr. HELLE (International Committee of the Red Cross) thanked the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons for the work he had done to enhance awareness and provide clarification. He hoped that the deliberations on how better to meet the immense needs for assistance and protection of internally displaced persons would result in more predictable, effective and mutually complementary cooperation among all the organizations concerned.

17. The ICRC considered it important that the role of the organizations be defined as clearly as possible and had recently issued a paper outlining its involvement with internally displaced persons affected by armed conflict. It sought to give priority to assisting those in most urgent need, in accordance with the principal of impartiality. An internally displaced person was first and foremost a civilian, and as such was protected by international humanitarian law. It was important to underline the fact that internally displaced persons remained entitled to the protection provided by international human rights law, humanitarian law and domestic law. The ICRC sought to establish a dialogue with all parties to conflicts with a view to making them fulfil their legal obligations and ease the plight of victims under their control. It was important that the ICRC's cooperation with other organizations should not jeopardize its reputation as a neutral, impartial and independent organization.

18. Nevertheless, lack of security and denial of access often made it difficult for humanitarian organizations to apply humanitarian law. They accordingly needed the assistance of States. The ICRC welcomed the increased attention given to the problem, notably in the Security Council, but more must be done. States must not only respect but also enforce international humanitarian law; wherever necessary, they should seek to influence the authorities concerned so that civilians were protected against abuse and spared from military operations, and the role of humanitarian workers was properly understood and accepted.

19. Mr. KAVADZE (Observer for Georgia) said he wished to draw the Commission's attention to the problem of Abkhazia, a Georgian province now in the hands of separatists, and in particular to the fate of the thousands of Georgians now in the Gali district. After having been driven out, those Georgians had returned to their homeland and were now being subjected to persecution and constant pressure by separatist paramilitary groups and the Abkhazian militia, which were doing everything possible to make them leave for good. The Georgian Government fully supported the efforts being made by various United Nations bodies to maintain peace and protect human rights in the region. The memorandum of understanding signed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Department of Peace Keeping Operations was an extremely useful measure. Taking due account of that memorandum, it would be advisable to organize joint activities by the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia and the United Nations/OSCE Field Office in Sokhumi in order to monitor the human rights situation in the region.

20. His delegation fully supported the initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for the creation of a rapid reaction force that could be quickly deployed in urgent situations to protect population groups in danger of being subjected to genocide and ethnic cleansing. He also believed that an international criminal tribunal should be established to investigate and bring to justice all those responsible for mass killings, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

21. Mr. LAKATOS (Observer for Hungary), speaking on agenda item 14(b) (Minorities), welcomed the increasing participation of NGOs and representatives of minorities in the work of the Working Group on Minorities, although his delegation believed that Governments should play a more active role at the sessions of the Working Group. Prevention, which could avoid internal tensions and the outbreak of armed conflicts, was the most effective form of protection for minorities in danger. The

rights of national minorities should, moreover, be taken into account in post-conflict peace building and democracy building. Noting that the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe placed special emphasis on the protection of minorities, his delegation encouraged the Working Group to seek ways of cooperating with Stability Pact mechanisms.

22. His delegation attached great importance to the conclusions and recommendations of the two expert seminars organized by the Working Group in Flensburg, Germany, and Montreal, Canada. The seminars had stressed the importance of participation by minorities in political life and the need to reflect in educational curricula the history and culture of all the groups within the society, the participation of all groups in political life and educational programmes, the teaching of the mother tongue and the role of reconciliation processes through education. The seminar organized in Geneva on the autonomy of the Åland Islands had clearly shown that the rule of law was a precondition for finding sustainable solutions to the problems involving minorities.

23. His Government, which currently held the chairmanship of the Central European Initiative for the Protection of Minority Rights, had proposed a joint meeting between the Working Group on Minorities set up by the Initiative and the Subcommission Working Group and looked forward to a fruitful exchange of views.

24. Mr. ANN Hee Kyet (Observer for Singapore), speaking on agenda item 14(a) (Human rights of migrants), expressed support for the efforts to protect the civil and social rights of migrants. In Singapore all migrants had the same right to the protection of the law as citizens did. Each State should, however, retain control of its own immigration policy, which was based on various factors, such as the size of the country, population growth, labour market needs and social order. The acquisition of long-term residence or citizenship for migrants and their families could not be automatic. A clear distinction should also be drawn between legal and illegal migrants. Although illegal migrants should have the right to equality before the law and access to due legal process, their rights were necessarily subject to certain limitations.

25. Nonetheless, much could be done at the international level toprotect migrants, including illegal migrants and in particular women and children, against exploitation and human rights violations. Extra efforts should be made to stem illegal migration and human trafficking, particularly at source. In that respect, there was a need for greater cooperation between sending and receiving States with regard to tracking illegal migration, punishing human traffickers, raising international awareness of the issue and facilitating the orderly return of illegal migrants.

26. Ms. BOYKO (Observer for Ukraine) said that her country, in which there lived the representatives of almost 110 nationalities, had always been committed to ensuring harmonious relations both among minorities and between them and the majority population. All discrimination was forbidden and minority rights were protected through the inclusion in bilateral treaties concluded by Ukraine of articles in conformity with the provisions of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. In Ukraine all nationalities had the right to *preserve their symbols*, observe their holidays, participate in the traditional rituals of their peoples and profess their religion. It could not, unfortunately, be said that the same was true in all the countries where ethnic Ukrainians resided. Her delegation strongly supported the Commission recommendation that the human rights treaty bodies, when considering reports submitted by States parties, should give particular attention to the implementation of articles relating to minority rights.

27. With regard to internal displacement, States bore the primary responsibility for preventing of such displacement, providing of protection and assistance to internally displaced people and remedying

the causes of the situation. One of the migration policy priorities in Ukraine was the return of Crimean Tatars and representatives of other nationalities deported under the totalitarian regime and their resettlement in their ancestral lands. The Council of Crimean Tatar Nation Representatives had been established with a view to facilitating the return of Crimean Tatars and addressing the problems relating to their reintegration in Ukrainian society. Ukraine was grateful to various international organizations, particularly the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration and the OSCE, for their assistance in that regard.

28. In relation to agenda item 14(d) (Other vulnerable groups and individuals), her delegation wished to inform the Commission that the Ukrainian delegation to the Security Council had put forward an initiative to convene a special session of the General Assembly that would elaborate a new strategy to strengthen international cooperation in combating AIDS.

29. Ms. von HEIDENSTAM (Observer for Sweden), speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, addressed agenda item 14(d) (Other vulnerable groups and individuals), and more specifically the issue of persons with disabilities, who were particularly exposed to discrimination. It was not enough to state that persons with disabilities had the same rights as other people; that equality should be ensured by giving them equal opportunities, which meant, above all, enabling them to participate actively in society and contribute to the community, rather than seeing them as a burden. All socially determined barriers preventing such participation should therefore be eliminated. The State should not decide how persons with disability should live, but it should respect their dignity, while giving each individual the opportunity to make his or her own choice.

30. An estimated 80 per cent of the world's disabled people lived in developing countries. Most were very poor and lacked any services. Despite economic and other constraints, Governments should take persons with disabilities into account in their policies. A Nordic conference would be held in Denmark in November 2000 in order to examine ways of strengthening bilateral and multilateral development cooperation to help persons with disabilities. The particular problems faced by disabled women and girls, who often needed to be protected from violence, not least sexual violence, should be recognized and taken into account. The Nordic Governments welcomed the fact that the Commission on the Status of Women had included the disability dimension in its work. Children with disabilities were also particularly exposed to discrimination and marginalization.

31. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had been and continued to be an extremely useful tool for Governments. They had resulted in increased cooperation between Governments and international and non-governmental organizations, as well as raising awareness of issues concerning persons with disabilities. The adoption of Commission resolution 1998/31 on the human rights of persons with disabilities 1998 had been a step in the right direction. The way forward was to ensure that the issue of discrimination against persons with disabilities was even more scrupulously taken into account by the whole United Nations system.

32. Ms. MILLER (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) paid tribute to the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Deng, for his work on internal displacement.

33. Through its field presence, UNICEF worked in more 40 countries in partnership with children and women displaced owing to armed conflict and natural disasters. For example, in the southern Sudan, UNICEF provided assistance to 350,000 children, many of whom had been displaced several times during the course of the conflict. Over the past year, "days of tranquillity" had been organized in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and the Sudan to immunize children against polio. By protecting the rights of displaced children and

women, UNICEF looked to encourage the interested parties to consider their future. Such initiatives might lay the foundations for the peace process.

34. UNICEF applauded the increased focus on internal displacement over recent years. Indeed, it promoted the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement among its field staff and partners. It had actively participated in the efforts of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Emergencies and had worked with other organizations and NGOs to develop the policy on the protection of internally displaced persons and supplementary guidance for resident coordinators. Lastly, UNICEF encouraged the Representative of the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to study the extent to which internal displacement situations had been taken into account by the consolidated appeals process.

35. UNICEF considered that a subregional approach to dealing with crises of internal and external displacement was needed. In other words, resources should be targeted where they were needed most, whether for internally displaced persons, refugees or the local population. The members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Emergencies were redoubling their efforts in the current year to find solutions to crises of internal displacement. UNICEF hoped that the members of the Commission would support such activities so that it would be possible to have unimpeded access to internally displaced populations.

36. Mr. MAC AODHA (Observer for Ireland) thanked Mr. Lindqvist, the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, for his statement. His observations and conclusions on the second period of monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities had been of great interest. It was a welcome development that disability issues were currently approached in a human rights context and no longer exclusively in a social welfare context. It was also worth recalling the continued isolation and exclusion of persons with disabilities in societies around the world. The Special Rapporteur had highlighted, in particular, the fact that women and children with disabilities were especially exposed to discrimination, despite efforts to improve their living conditions.

37. The problems encountered by people with disabilities should be tackled with the same tools as in other situations of human rights violations: sound legislation at national level backed by adequate funding, international standard-setting, application of benchmarks and guaranteed monitoring by international bodies.

38. The Standard Rules had, since their adoption in 1993, contributed to the positive developments in disabilities issues policies. However, since they had no binding force, the rules were not always fully applied. The idea of a convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, which had already been put forward by NGOs, among others, in Beijing, had begun to make some headway. The Organization of American States had adopted the Inter-American convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination for Reasons of Disability. It was therefore high time to envisage adopting a world convention dealing with the issue, as suggested by the Special Rapporteur, who had also rightly highlighted the necessity of ensuring that the disability dimension was included in the work of the treaty monitoring bodies.

39. It was essential that people with reduced physical mobility should be able to gain easy access to all public service buildings. His Government had recently introduced proposals to make all new houses visitable by people with disabilities. It had also set up several bodies with special responsibility for issues relating to persons with disabilities.

40. His delegation intended to submit a draft resolution on the human rights of disabled persons, which it hoped would be adopted by consensus.

41. Mr. DRAGANOV (Observer for Bulgaria), speaking about the issue of minorities, with the focus on the Roma population, said that no country in Europe had achieved the full social integration of the Roma. Very often their traditional way of life was used as an excuse for not doing enough for them.

42. Three years previously, the Bulgarian Government had created a National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues, as a body for consultation, cooperation and coordination between State institutions and NGOs. In 1998 the Council had developed a framework programme for the reintegration of the Roma population into society. A principal objective of the programme was to enable the Roma to participate actively in the decision-making process and in governance at local, regional and national levels. The programme covered the following topics: discrimination, media, social policy, housing, education, health care, culture and economy. The first steps towards implementing the programme had already been taken, both at the national level, with representatives of the Roma being employed in government ministries and, at the regional and municipal levels, with the appointment of experts to coordinate on ethnic and demographic issues in regional administrations.

43. Government projects relating to the reintegration of the Roma received more and more international support. The National Council on Ethnic and Demographic Issues had recently developed a project that had been awarded €500,000 from the PHARE Programme. The project focused on three areas: education, reconstruction of Roma neighbourhoods and training and promotion of employment of Roma in the police force. A World Bank grant amounting to US$ 500,000, currently awaiting approval, would be directed towards strengthening national, regional and municipal institutions dealing with ethnic issues and towards training experts of Roma origin in administration skills. A number of bilateral programmes with various European countries strongly emphasized the more active participation of the Roma in economic and social life.

44. His Government had ratified the major international instruments relating to minority rights, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. His delegation was, however, perfectly aware that deeds spoke louder than words and that only the implementation of results-orientated government policies would bring Bulgaria into line with the highest standards. That objective remained a priority for the Bulgarian Government, which had recently embarked on negotiations with a view to acceding to the European Union.

45. Mr. SUNGAR (Observer for Turkey), speaking on agenda item 14 (a), said that migrant workers, numbering millions of people in the developed world, lived with no protection. Some 2.7 million Turks currently lived in Western Europe, more than half of them constituting the third generation. Although the overwhelming majority did not intend to return to Turkey, they were denied full participation in the political life of their societies. Treated as foreigners and lacking equal opportunities in employment, education and housing, they quickly turned into outcasts, exposed to discrimination, xenophobia and violence. Many lived under the constant threat of harassment, if not murder or arson. Many Turkish workers living in western European countries had lost their lives to such acts of violence.

46. His delegation believed that the solution to such problems was integration rather than assimilation. An important element was that migrants should be granted the right to vote and to stand for local elections. They should also have the opportunity of holding dual citizenship.

47. His delegation fully supported the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants and trusted that it would be taken into account in preparations for the forthcoming World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

48. Mr. PENROD (Observer for Costa Rica), speaking on the question of migrant workers, welcomed the fact that the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Rodríguez Pizarro, had examined the situation of the growing numbers of migrant women and had formulated a number of recommendations with a view to ensuring better protection of migrants. That protection needed to address the entire process of migration, viewed as a whole. In other words, it should consider both the reasons that compelled individuals to leave their countries of origin and also what conditions would enable them to return. Consequently, consideration must be given to means of preventing exoduses.

49. More often than not, migrants left their homes in search of better living conditions. Yet everyone should have the right not to emigrate, or, in other words, to enjoy a decent standard of living in his or her own country. Individuals who emigrated rendered themselves vulnerable, particularly when they did so illegally; for transboundary trafficking in persons entailed many risks and constituted a form of exploitation of human beings. The question should also be treated at international and regional levels, given that criminal organizations were implicated in such operations.

50. Over the past 20 years Costa Rica had become a migrant-receiving country. Clandestine migration of persons seeking work had compelled the Government to take decisions on the matter. It had adopted a policy of assimilating migrants while respecting their fundamental rights, and of extending protection to them and particularly to women and children. At the legal level, migrants from Central America had the right to decide between temporary or permanent resident status. Currently, 15 per cent of the Costa Rican population were immigrants. They were able to work on an equal footing with Costa Rican nationals. They were entitled to social security and had access to health care free of charge, even when not documented. Similarly, the children of migrants were admitted to Costa Rican schools, where education was free of charge. The Government had also decided to legalize the status of those who had entered the country without documentation in the first half of 1999, when hurricane Mitch had led to massive immigration. That exceptional regime had benefited hundreds of thousands of refugees, most of them from Nicaragua. The regularization of their status meant that migrants had the right to reside legally in Costa Rica and to work there on an equal footing with Costa Ricans. The Government had also established a commission responsible for ensuring implementation of the policy of integration of the migrant population in the social, cultural and employment spheres.

51. Mr. BERTELLO (Observer for the Holy See), referring to the report by Ms. Rodríguez Pizarro on the question of migrant workers, noted that, although in the past migration had been regarded as a motor of economic and social development, nowadays the supply of foreign manpower in the developed countries often exceeded demand. Moreover, the growing disparity between those countries and the developing countries exacerbated migratory pressures, at the very time when the Governments of the industrialized countries were tightening their legislation on entry of foreign workers and intensifying border controls. Furthermore, large sections of the public in the receiving countries felt invaded and threatened by those immigrants - a feeling sometimes compounded by xenophobia and racial prejudice - and tried to turn them into scapegoats. In the face of that complex situation, which particularly affected a growing number of women emigrants, the Special Rapporteur recommended a change of approach in the formulation of immigration policies. Inter alia, she recommended ensuring equal treatment for women in the areas of remuneration, working conditions and safety at work, and the introduction of appropriate measures to facilitate the integration of women migrants in society. Nor should it be forgotten that there were a number of dubious organizations that encouraged young women to emigrate illegally by giving them unrealistic hopes as to their chances of success.

52. The difficulties facing emigrants were felt particularly keenly by children, who had the impression that they were rejected by the society in which they lived. In that regard, the Special Rapporteur rightly placed emphasis on the situation of children who were compelled to work in order to assist their parents or lived on the streets in utter poverty.

53. Throughout its history the Roman Catholic Church had striven to assist migrants, without discrimination on the basis of nationality, religion or social class; for it was incumbent on Christians to shoulder their responsibilities in that regard unequivocally and resolutely. Mere denunciation of the negative aspects of migrants was not enough. Migrants must be helped to surmount their difficulties and to become integrated in the countries which they had chosen to live.

54. Ms. AREZES (International Organization for Migration - IOM) said that the report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants threw very instructive light on the question and illustrated the complexity and wide-ranging nature of the problem: complex, because migrants were not yet identified as a homogeneous group in international law; wide-ranging, because of the large number of categories of migrants and the broad range of measures that needed to be taken to prevent violations of their rights.

55. IOM was attached to the principle that migrations conducted in an orderly fashion and with respect for human dignity were beneficial to migrants and society alike. Directly or indirectly, IOM contributed to safeguarding the dignity of migrants by ensuring their de facto protection through various types of activities.

56. In her organization's view, the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants had a threefold function: first, to be the spokesperson for those who had no voice of their own, in other words, to draw attention to the risks and dangers to which migrants were exposed and to lend added international legitimacy to their claims. Secondly, the Special Rapporteur must encourage positive preventive measures. Those measures included provision of objective and reliable information to potential migrants, advisory services and enhancement of consular services for migrants, and, lastly, ratification of international instruments, including the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Lastly, the Special Rapporteur must liaise between the interested parties. By establishing links between the various actors involved in the protection of migrants' rights, the Special Rapporteur would be able to contribute to ensuring greater convergence of efforts and increased effectiveness. In other words, the keyword must be effectiveness of protection.

57. Mr. YUSHKEVICH (Observer for Belarus) said that respect for the rights of national minorities was a question to which his country accorded great importance because of the large number of nationalities living on Belarusian territory. According to the 1999 census, national minorities represented 19 per cent of the Belarusian population, which comprised more than 100 different nationalities.

58. The provisions adopted in recent years by the Belarusian Government in order to safeguard the rights of those minorities complied with international standards. Currently, more than 200 associations bringing together members of the various nationalities existed in Belarus. There were also a number of educational establishments in which teaching was provided in the languages of those nationalities, particularly Lithuanian and Polish. Russian was the country's second language and was taught everywhere.

59. In addition to the international instruments concerning minorities, Belarus had signed almost 60 international agreements aimed at protecting the rights of minorities in all spheres: science, culture, education, information, etc. Furthermore, representatives of the national minorities worked in close contact with the government organs responsible for religious and nationality issues.

60. In Belarus, minorities were free to practise their religion. The Orthodox faith ranked first, followed by Roman Catholicism. Besides Protestants, whose numbers had increased greatly in recent years, orthodox and liberal Jews and Islamic communities were also to be found in Belarus.

61. Lastly, thanks to its ability to preserve stability after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus had seen no exodus of its citizens to other regions. The good relations that prevailed between the various national communities made Belarus one of the few countries of the former Soviet area which had seen no bloodshed as a result of racial or national conflicts.

62. Mr. VIGNY (Observer for Switzerland), speaking on agenda item 14(b), said it was regrettable that a lack of political will on the part of many States, including Western States, to participate effectively in the Working Group on Minorities had prevented it from fulfilling its role as an ideal forum for concerted action and exchanges of information on that issue. Many representatives of the minorities lacked the financial resources to enable them to come to Geneva. Hence the importance of "Appeal 2000", launched by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, calling on countries to emulate Switzerland by making voluntary contributions to finance travel by those representatives. Also very positive was the decision by the Working Group to communicate to States unable to attend one of its sessions the assessments made by their minorities of the situation in those countries, and to request the authorities concerned to reply in writing, so as to establish a dialogue with those minorities at the next session. Similarly, the fact that the Working Group had been invited to visit countries, such as Slovenia and Mauritius, to make an on-the-spot investigation of the situation of minorities, was a source of satisfaction. Switzerland also supported the other initiatives taken by the Working Group, particularly the convening of regional seminars in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the decision to publish a handbook containing the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and a commentary on the principles formulated therein. That commentary would make it possible to spell out States' commitments to minorities, and thus to guage the extent of application of the Declaration. Switzerland also supported the setting up by the Working Group of a database including, inter alia, a list of NGOs working to defend human rights and a bibliography on the question.

63. While it was regrettable that the international community had not yet succeeded in coming up with a definition of minorities, a task on which it had embarked in 1948, it should nevertheless be noted that that had not prevented the Council of Europe from recently adopting a framework Convention for the protection of national minorities.

64. Ms. MORENO FONTES CHAMMARTIN (International Labour Organization - ILO), speaking on agenda item 14 (a), said that in one of its recent publications ILO had shown that in recent years rather than helping countries move closer together, political resistance to migration had contributed to a widening of economic disparities. While constraints to trade and the free flow of capital had been removed, the doors to labour migration had progressively been shut. That had not stopped migration, for statistics showed that the number of migrants around the world, which had totalled 75 million in 1965, was now more than 120 million, and continued to increase. Indeed, migration pressures were worsening in many parts of the world in response to growing disparities between wages in industrial and developing countries. Thus, in 1995 hourly labour costs had been almost $32 in Germany and only $0.25 in India. To that must be added an increase in exports from industrial to developing countries,

causing unemployment in the latter, and the fact that receiving countries were becoming dependent on migrant labour for jobs that nationals did not want because they were too dangerous, too poorly paid or too demeaning. Migrant labour served to keep alive economic sectors which would otherwise not be competitive in global markets. Thus, in 1991 the United States Government had estimated that 77 per cent of all workers employed in United States crop production were foreign-born.

65. At the same time, all the indicators pointed to an increasing vulnerability of migrant workers and a deterioration in their living and working conditions, sometimes verging on slavery, particularly in the case of the growing number of undocumented migrants. In 1999 ILO had begun to set up a database in order to compile information on violations of migrants' human and labour rights. To the best of her knowledge, it was the only institution that was compiling information of that type, which could be used to draw the attention of the authorities to serious problems. ILO appreciated the role that the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants could play in helping to develop such information and proposing new mechanisms to ensure respect for migrants' rights.

66. Mr. HUHTANIEMI (Observer for Finland) said he was taking the floor on behalf of his own country and the Netherlands.

67. Referring to the question of minorities, he said that the right of minorities to practise their religion, use their own language and enjoy their own way of life, individually and as a community, was a fundamental right. That was an aspect of the principle of non-discrimination enshrined in the Convention on that question. In that regard, Finland welcomed the fact that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination accorded great importance to the rights of disadvantaged minorities. It urged States parties to recognize the competence of the Committee to receive communications from individuals or groups claiming to be victims of discrimination. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance would provide an excellent opportunity for countries to pool their experiences in combating racial discrimination and intolerance, which often gave rise to intra-State conflicts. Finland encouraged States to involve their minorities in the preparations for the Conference and to include representatives of those minorities in their delegations to the Conference itself. He drew particular attention to the Roma and Sinti communities, who were the targets of discriminatory policies based on prejudice and intolerance. Governments must take special measures to ensure full enjoyment of their rights by the Roma and Sinti communities.

68. On agenda item 14 (d), "Other vulnerable groups and individuals," he expressed dismay at discrimination or even persecution to which persons were subjected on grounds of their sexual proclivity. Some legal systems even maintained provisions depriving such individuals of some of their rights or authorizing interference in their private lives by criminalizing sexual acts between consenting adults on grounds of "indecency". It was totally contrary to the fundamental principles of universality and non-discrimination to exclude anybody from any aspect of the protection provided by international human rights instruments. He welcomed the efforts of [illegible] to increase the visibility in that area and urged all Governments to protect human rights defenders working to ensure respect for the rights of homosexuals.

69. Mr. STROHAL (Observer for Austria), speaking on agenda item 14 (b), said that the vast majority of contemporary conflicts involved minorities, and must thus be prevented by creating an open and multi-ethnic society. Austria, as Chair-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), stressed that Organization's role in conflict prevention in regions at risk. Experience in the Balkans had shown the crucial importance of prevention. Safeguarding the rights of

minorities was the best means of ensuring the territorial integrity of States. In that regard, NGOs were indispensable partners in crisis management and conflict prevention.

70. At the regional level, Austria considered that the framework Convention for the protection of national minorities was crucial to safeguarding the rights of minorities in Europe. That Convention that been ratified by 29 Council of Europe member States, among them Austria, and by two non-member States.

71. At the global level, Austria attached great importance to the work of the Working Group on Minorities, and in particular to the commentary to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. That commentary should assist Governments and minorities in coming to a better understanding of the commitments entered into under the Declaration. The Working Group might even play a still greater role as an early-warning mechanism and in preventing minority-related conflicts. Austria hoped that the Working Group would be involved in the preparations for the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

72. Firm in the conviction that minorities enriched the societies in which they lived and that they needed special protection in order to preserve their identity, language and culture, Austria had adopted legislation to ensure the protection of the ethnic groups living in its territory. Advisory councils to the Federal Government and to federal ministers advised the authorities on all matters relating to minorities. Lastly, a government programme signed in February 2000 confirmed Austria's commitment to the protection of minorities though concrete measures.

73. Turning to the issue of displaced persons, he paid tribute to the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, Mr. Francis Deng, for his role in fostering awareness of the problems posed by the millions of people displaced within the borders of their own countries, both for the countries concerned and among the international community as a whole. In particular, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were being used as a benchmark by many parties active in that field, and the dialogue that Mr. Deng had initiated with Governments on the question was a positive step.

74. Austria intended to submit draft resolutions on the rights of persons belonging to minorities and on internally displaced persons. It hoped that, as in past years, those resolutions would receive wide support and would be adopted by consensus.

75. Mr. Ibrahim (Sudan) took the Chair.

76. Mr. MUSAYEV (Observer for Azerbaijan) said that Azerbaijan had one of the largest displaced populations in the world. In its four resolutions on the armed conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Security Council had called for unimpeded access to the affected areas by humanitarian organizations in order to alleviate the sufferings of the civilian population. Furthermore, on 20 December 1993 the General Assembly had adopted resolution 48/114, on emergency international assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Azerbaijan.

77. Although a ceasefire had been in effect since May 1996, a political settlement of the conflict had still not been achieved. As a result, the situation of refugees and displaced persons remained a matter of deep concern. Nevertheless, because of the protracted nature of the crisis and the absence of active hostilities for some years, the international community had turned its attention elsewhere and donors were losing interest. However, as the Representative of the Secretary-General had recommended in his

report (E/CN.4/1999/79/Add.1), it was essential to continue the emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in Azerbaijan. At the same time it must be borne in mind that only through a lasting peaceful settlement of the conflict could a true solution be found.

78. With regard to the question of minorities, the Government of Azerbaijan considered that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities contributed to the political and social stability of States. At the same time, it must also be stressed that those persons must respect the national legislation and the rights of others living in the same country. In accordance with article 8, paragraph 4, of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and article 20 of the Council of Europe's framework Convention for the protection of national minorities, the promotion of minority rights could not be interpreted as permitting any activity contrary to the fundamental principles of international law, including the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States. Respect for those principles was the basis for the contemporary international legal order.

79. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Observer for Cyprus) congratulated Mr. Francis Deng, Representative of the Secretary-General, on the committed and effective manner in which he had pursued his mandate, particularly on his contribution to drawing up and promoting the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

80. While expressing support for the efforts to establish an appropriate legal regime for internally displaced persons, he wished to share some thoughts that were based on his country's experience. He recalled that the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 had led to the forcible displacement of about one third of the population living in the area that was occupied. That had occurred despite the existence of an international legal order because a Government had deliberately decided to further its own political objectives in spite of those international legal standards. Such events showed that the fault did not lie with the existing legal framework but the lack of political will on the part of countries to honour their obligations and responsibilities under the instruments and agreements that were in force.

81. Turkey had not only expelled all the Greek Cypriots living in the occupied zone from their homes, but had also organized the implantation of almost 120,000 of its own citizens as colonists in the occupied area, in violation of the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention. Furthermore, Turkey had set about changing the demographic structure in favour of the Turkish population by implementing policies that were contrary to the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention and the third Vienna Agreement concluded between the two Parties. In addition, Turkey had systematically prevented the return of displaced persons in violation of article 13.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which affirmed the right of everyone to return to his or her country.

82. Those facts demonstrated the need to ensure that any standard-setting activity was accompanied by vigorous measures to ensure respect for established standards. States should not be able to act with impunity in defiance of international law. It was necessary to make sure that the use of force and violations of human rights were punished and efforts made to reverse the results of aggression. In the case of Cyprus, that required full compliance with United Nations resolutions and high-level agreements defining the conditions for a settlement of the Cyprus problem, namely the establishment of a bizonal, bicommunal federation with a single sovereignty and international personality and a single citizenship, with its independence and territorial integrity safeguarded.

83. Ms. HINES (Observer for the World Food Programme) said that internally displaced persons were particularly affected by the problem of food insecurity. Having had to abandon their land and

their homes, they often found themselves without the ability to produce food or to earn money to buy food.

84. Their vulnerability and extreme poverty made it difficult to provide effective assistance and protection to internally displaced persons. That was why the World Food Programme was particularly concerned to try to understand the dynamics of displacements of population, the problems of access by displaced persons to food assistance and the needs of the various displaced groups, especially women, children, the elderly or the disabled.

85. Sensitivity to the particular needs of displaced persons should not translate into assistance programmes that discriminated against others or caused tensions with local populations. While there were some situations where it was necessary to take targeted action on behalf of displaced persons, particularly when they lived in camps, it was generally preferable to assist them through broader programmes which were also aimed at other groups.

86. Despite the efforts that were made, the measures takento assist and protect displaced persons were often insufficient and limited compared with those extended to refugees. In that connection, a fundamental problem was the lack of a clear legal and institutional framework, as well as inadequate resources and a lack of coordination.

87. The World Food Programme had endorsed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee paper on Protection of Internally Displaced Persons, dated 6 December 1999, and would be working with other agencies to implement it. It confirmed its commitment to promoting the search for durable solutions. It would continue with its work in the field in coming to the assistance of displaced persons, while continuing to advocate national government responsibility in that area and substituting its assistance for that of the relevant authorities as little as possible.

88. Mr. NOIRFALISSE (Observer for Belgium) said that the contemporary forms of slavery were a crucial subject and underlined the deep commitment of his country in that regard, particularly in combating trafficking in children. Stating that that commitment had been unjustly called into question, he recalled that the Belgian authorities had always collaborated with the Commission, the special rapporteurs concerned and the Office of the High Commissioner in providing all information requested.

89. The Belgian legislation of 1995 on stamping out trafficking in human beings, child pornography and the sexual abuse of minors had been reassessed following the tragic events that had taken place in Belgium four years ago, and very precise directives were now being implemented to make the laws that were in force more effective. Furthermore, the Belgian Parliament was currently drawing up new legislative provisions to enhance the criminal protection of minors against ill-treatment of whatever form. Belgium already possessed pioneering legislation in the area of combating sexual abuse via the Internet; a protocol of cooperation with the Belgian Organization of Service Providers had been concluded in May 1999. Furthermore, on its initiative, the European Union had adopted joint programmes the most ambitious of which dealt with the criminalization of trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children and with international cooperation in that area. Finally, Belgium had fully supported the adoption of the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the conclusion of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Draft Convention against transnational organized crime, the protocols of which would deal particularly with combating the traffic in human beings, especially women and children, and the traffic in migrants. The Belgian delegation was convinced that all the measures and policies implemented at national level would be able to bear fruit only within the framework of an enhanced, coherent and more effective European and international system.

90. Mr. NAZARIAN (Observer for Armenia) explained that his country was particularly sensitive to the question of minorities by virtue of its history and because twice as many Armenians lived outside Armenia as inside. With personal experience of the Diaspora, Armenia attached considerable importance to the rights of minorities and had taken all necessary measures to guarantee the exercise of those rights by all the minorities living within its territories. The Kurds, for example, who represented about 2 per cent of Armenia's population, had their schools, newspapers, associations, etc. Many other groups (Russians, Assyrians, Greeks, Ukrainians, Georgians, Poles, Germans, etc.) lived in Armenia and enjoyed the same rights.

91. Shortly after independence, the national minorities in Armenia had founded the Union of Nationalities, which represented the 12 different communities and dealt with economic, social, cultural and other questions related to the minorities. The President of the Republic had recently appointed an adviser on relations with national minorities, whose first important task was to organize the Congress of National Minorities living in Armenia. Furthermore, in 1998, Armenia had signed and ratified the Council of Europe framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

92. Armenia appreciated the activities of the United Nations treaty bodies in encouraging States parties to adopt measures, particularly by addressing recommendations to them. Nevertheless, Armenia noted with concern that racial hatred and acts of violence towards persons belonging to minorities was still widespread. Armenia was therefore determined to contribute to the efforts of the Working Group on Minorities in seeking solutions and promoting mutual understanding between minorities and Governments, and welcomed the recommendations made by the Working Group in document E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/21.

93. Ms. SYDHOFF (International Council of Voluntary Agencies), speaking also on behalf of the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation and the International Catholic Migration Commission, said that internally displaced persons, whose number continued to grow at an alarming rate, constituted one of the most vulnerable groups of people in the world.

94. She deplored the fact that although the international community had recognized the tragic plight of displaced persons, the measures taken by the United Nations to come to their aid were extremely limited, sporadic and uncoordinated. Millions of people had been left to fend for themselves because of problems of access or because the United Nations mechanisms did not have the necessary resources and were not adequately coordinated.

95. The current debate on the activities for internally displaced persons within the United Nations system was welcome. It was to be hoped that it would contribute to enhancing the role of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and lead to better coordination between the humanitarian agencies at regional and national levels. The appointment of Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators was encouraging. It was important that they encourage the participation of NGOs, which were often alone in being able to secure direct access to the persons affected.

96. Important achievements had already been made thanks to the action of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Francis Deng. It was regrettable, however, that the resources which he had in order to fulfil his mandate were not greater. One of the most important achievements to which he had contributed had been the development and promotion of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Many NGOs had translated and disseminated them. They requested all Governments to recognize them.

97. The organizations on whose behalf she was speaking hoped that the Representative of the Secretary-General would soon be able to visit and hold discussions with government representatives of the following countries: Myanmar, in order to urge the authorities to put an end to the systematic programmes of forced relocation; Angola, where there was an immediate need for a concerted effort to bring the internal conflict, which had produced massive displacements of populations for over 30 years, to an end; Chechnya, to demand that the Russian authorities allow access to displaced persons and guarantee their safety and that of humanitarian personnel; and Turkey, to urge the Government to respect the rights of the Kurdish people and to seek a political solution to the Kurdish problem.

98. Finally, she called on the Commission to urge all Governments fully to adhere to all their obligations under international law; to recognize their responsibility to secure protection and assistance for displaced persons in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; and to facilitate the work of the Special Representative by providing him with long-term financial support.

99. Mr. LITTMAN (Association for World Education), speaking on agenda item 14 (b) and (d), denounced the atrocities of which the Copts were victims in Egypt where, according to an organization based in Cairo, 40 massacres had been carried out against them in the past 30 years. The United Nations should not ignore the plight of that martyred people, which was the heir to one of the oldest civilizations in the world.

100. One particular contemporary form of slavery which should be denounced was the traditional slavery which persisted in the Sudan. The Commission should categorically reject any attempt to replace the word "slavery" by the word "abduction" and must recognize that slavery was a crime against humanity, as had been stated recently by the Sub-Commission's working group which had examined the matter. The former Special Rapporteur on the situation in the Sudan, Mr. Gaspar Biro, had on many occasions denounced the slavery-like practices in that country, and Mr. Franco had done the same in his first report last year. According to Mr. Franco, it was currently the murahaleen militia, still called the mujahideen, and the Popular Defence Forces which were practising slavery. In his report, Mr. Franco recommended that the Government of the Sudan take all necessary measures to put an end to the incursions by those groups, which raided villages and abducted women and children. The Sudan, which claimed to have established a committee for the eradication of the abduction of women and children, made no mention anywhere of including international organizations in that committee although their participation was indispensable. Furthermore, if slavery was to be abolished it was also necessary to put an end to the practice of jihad, which was declared against its opponents by the National Islamic Front. In fact, jihad and slavery went hand in hand.

101. He said he expected the Commission clearly to condemn slavery, the slave trade and similar practices being carried out in the Sudan, and to call for international organizations to participate in the abolition of what was a crime against humanity.

102. Mr. ROSSI (International Association for Religious Freedom), speaking on the subject of minorities, recalled article 4 of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities which stipulated that States were obliged to take measures to ensure that persons belonging to minorities might exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law. Unfortunately, that was far from being the case in many parts of the world. In Kashmir, the Hindu and Sikh minorities were victims of ethnic extremism; in Pakistan, Christians were still in a difficult situation and an order remained in force forbidding Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims. In Iran, freedom of assembly was denied to the Baha'is, Protestants were still subjected to harassment and Muslim converts to pressure.

103. In China, religious minorities had limited freedom, as demonstrated by the thousands of adherents of the Falun Gong Movement who had been imprisoned. In India, Christian minorities were very concerned by manifestations of violence on the part of Hindu extremists, who had gone so far as to attack convents, assassinate priests and rape nuns.

104. In Turkmenistan, the Adventist Church, which had obtained permission to build a temple in the capital, had just received an order to demolish it and was denied the right to exist and act as a community.

105. In France, an inter-ministerial commission to deal with sects had refused the status of cultural association to the Jehovah's Witnesses of whom there were more than 260,000 in the country and who felt themselves to be defamed and harassed, their peaceful religious movement being recognized in many countries in Europe and elsewhere. The French tax authorities had imposed a very heavy - 60 per cent - tax on the donations the Jehovah's Witnesses received.

106. It was not sufficient merely to adopt a resolution on minorities addressing all States in generic terms. Persecuted religious minorities must be protected by addressing the Governments of the countries concerned directly.

Statements made in exercise of the right of reply

107. Mr. FERRER RODRIGUEZ (Cuba), replying to the criticisms of his country made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada, said that once again a rich country from the North was, uninvited, aspiring to set itself up as a judge of the situation of human rights in the countries of the South and to give lessons on the subject. Canada, which was a country so vast that it took several hours to travel from East to West, was aspiring to overfly countries in three continents at supersonic speed. The least one could say was that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Canada should have started by overflying his own country. In any event one had the right to expect better of a country like Canada, which was so close to Cuba not only geographically but in many other ways too.

108. Mr. GAZIOGLU (Observer for Turkey), replying to the observer for Cyprus, said that the Greek Cypriot representative had once again portrayed the Cyprus question as a problem of "invasion and occupation" and in that respect had cited the fourth Geneva Convention. He recalled that Ms. Klerides, a Greek Cypriot parliamentarian, had recently acknowledged that the Cyprus problem had begun not in 1974 but in the 1960s. Turkey was not an occupying power, the Turkish Government had no jurisdiction over the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and the fourth Geneva Convention could not be applied in the case of Cyprus. As for the demographic question, the Greek Cypriots had become past masters in that they had managed to introduce thousands of settlers from Greece and between 1963 and 1974 had even tried to rid Cyprus of its ethnic Turkish population. As for the refugee problem, the Observer for Cyprus seemed to have forgotten that nearly four fifths of the Turkish Cypriot people had been rendered homeless and had become refugees since 1958, when the Greek Cypriot side had attempted to annex Cyprus to Greece. While the two sides were continuing to negotiate an agreement on the basis of a bizonal settlement, there was hypocrisy on the Greek Cypriot side in speaking about a return of refugees. If there was an issue of property claims, the Greek Cypriot side should reply to the proposal of the Turkish Cypriot side regarding the establishment of a commission for that purpose.

109. As for Armenia's allegations of genocide, its observer representative would have been more faithful to historical truth if he had mentioned the genocide of Turks at the hands of Armenians.

110. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Observer for Cyprus), replying to the observer for Turkey, recalled that as early as 1954, in other words well before the Turkish invasion of 1974, Turkey had, in numerous statements, demonstrated its intention to annex Cyprus to Turkey. It was interesting to note that the observer for Turkey had not disputed the violations of human rights his country had committed in Cyprus, being content to state that Turkey had no reason to apologize because it was not bound by the fourth Geneva Convention.

111. Mr. NAZARIAN (Observer for Armenia), replying to the observer for Turkey, said that the majority of delegations present must have been surprised by the version they had heard of the Armenian genocide, which had cost the lives of 1.5 million Armenian women, men and children. The Turkish statement was an offence to the survivors of the genocide and to other nations which had suffered similar tragedies. In a week's time there would be commemoration of the eighty-fifth anniversary of the crime, which had still not received worldwide acknowledgement. The observer delegation of Armenia condemned the provocative statement made by the observer delegation of Turkey and called upon it to show respect to the participants of the session.

112. Mr. GAZIOGLU (Observer for Turkey) said that once again the Greek Cypriots were claiming to have forgotten the events which preceded the Turkish intervention of 1974, namely the invasion of Cyprus by Greece. That was a fact which had been recognized before the Security Council in July 1974 by the then leader of the Greek Cypriot community, Archbishop Makarios.

113. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Observer for Cyprus) said that the violations of human rights committed by Turkey were known to all. They had been denounced by the Council of Europe as well as by the Commission on Human Rights itself. The issue was a very simple one despite the attempts made by Turkey to confuse the matter, and it was whether Turkey was at long last ready to conform with international law and respect human rights.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.